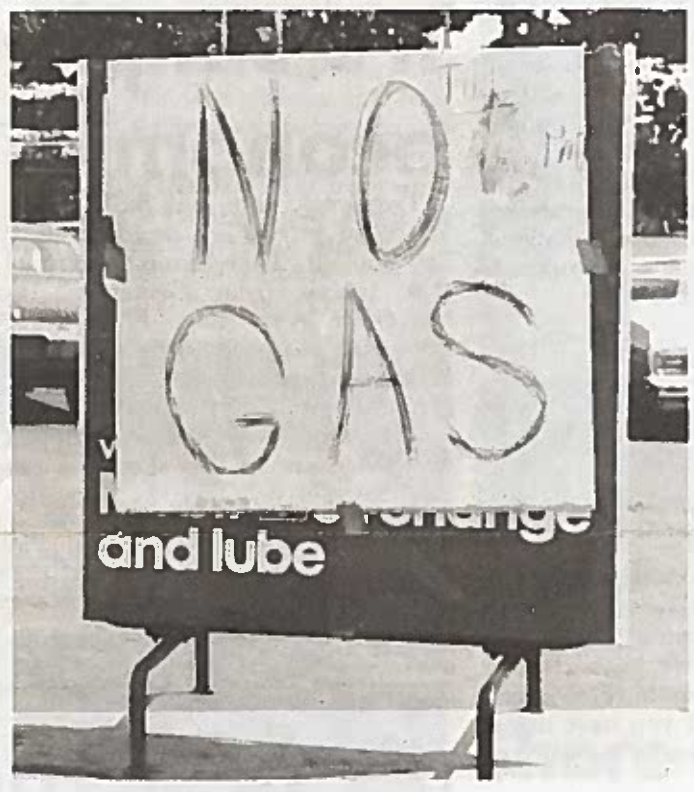
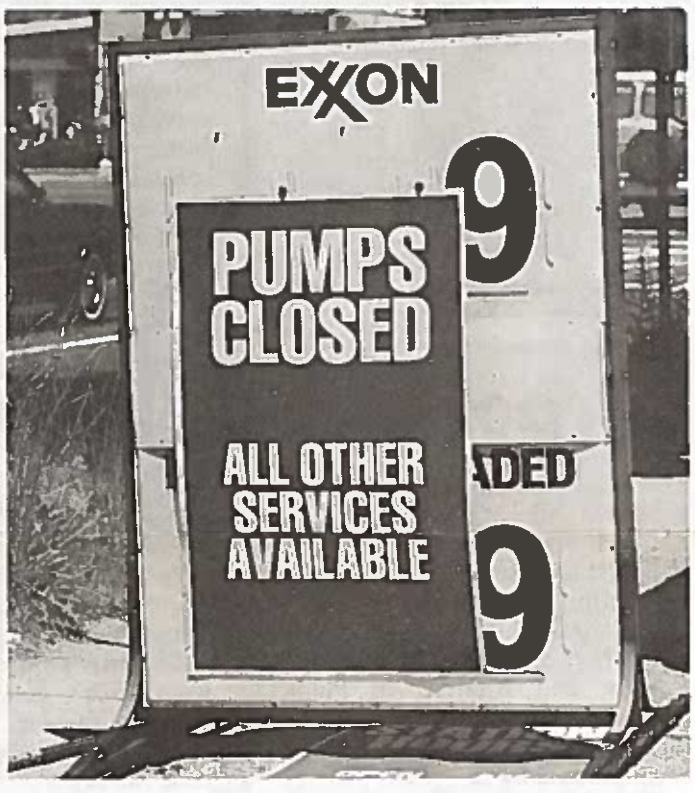
GRUMMAN plane news

Vol. 38, No. 13, July 6, 1979, Bethpage, N.Y.





Gas shortage: all signs say CARPOOL

Vanpooling begins shortly; bus services being studied

A few months ago, PLANE NEWS published an article on vanpooling. Over 500 Grummanites reported that they were interested in this relatively new mode of transportation.

The company's pilot vanpooling program will begin within the next several weeks with the leasing of five vans. Because of the large response and urgency of the gas situation, Grumman has decided to cut the first phase of the program from six to three months. If the three-month trial is a success, additional vans will be added to the program.

At present, Security and Employee Service personnel are reviewing applicants for the program; it is still too early to say when the pilot program will hit the road.

During the last gas crunch of '73-74, the company instituted interplant bus service. It is now examining the current most-travelled routes between the various Grumman facilities to determine the feasibility of such a service. Grumman is also taking bids from outside bus companies for special bus service (both east-west and west-east) to company facilities. This plan is similar to the service that was run from shopping malls to Grumman during the last gas crunch.

Going public?

If you are interested in taking the Long Island Railroad or local bus service to work, contact Art Gibson in Corporate Headquarters, Ext. 2333. If enough people are interested, special service might be arranged. You can write to Gibson at mail station, A23-111.

Commuter crew. *At Calverton, Grummanites (L to R) Dick Witt, Jerry Kern and Jack Buffa get ready to carpool home.*

'It's simple economics'

Two weeks ago, Jack Buffer, Dick Witt and Jerry Kern decided they'd had enough. They formed a carpool that travels from Centereach to Calverton every day. From early signs, they've already determined that it will be an everlasting commuter arrangement.

"Everybody feels he's being ripped off...there are no gas shortages per say," says Jerry. "Once the prices rise to optimum, there will be plenty of gas to go around." But shorter lines at the pumps will not split up this Calverton carpool.

"It's simple economics. My gas bills are only one-third of what they were two weeks ago. And with the price of gas per gallon rising, it's money in my pocket." His fellow carpoolers agree whole-heartedly.

Since they've known each other for over 15 years, they've encountered little problem in commuting together. "Jack's in Inspection, Dick's in Engineering and I'm in Avionics, and though we might disagree on the job, after-hours we're back to being friends," states Jerry.

Of course, there have been a few adjustments made. Jack who drives a Cadillac finds himself driving like the rest of his group...about 45 miles per hour. "It saves fuel and the others have been an influence in a way on my driving habits."

With each driver taking one week shifts, Jerry admits that it does crimp your lifestyle a bit. "I used to fly radio-controlled aircraft models after work. I have cut that out. But the savings in gas alone, makes it all worthwhile."

Carpooling Kills boredom

It all started when Tony Ricciuti needed a ride to work while his car was being repaired. Jim Gatto lived only a block away so he offered to take Tony in that day.

That was nine years ago. Now the two, both analysts in Production Release and Analysis in Plant 1, commute to work together every day and are very happy with the arrangement.

"It kills boredom," says Gatto. "We sit and talk about everything -- politics, the gas situation, religion, the gas situation, job problems and the gas situation."

The two say there are very "compatible" and enjoy the same topics of conversation as well as the same radio programs. "I look forward to the drive," says Ricciuti. "It's very enjoyable."

One of the benefits of carpooling, says Gatto, is that "you always have the other caar. If your car needs to be taken in for servicing or repairs, there's always the other car to take you to work. We always help each other out in emergencies."

Ricciuti points out that in bad weather it's good to have someone along in the car. "If you have to get out and push, it's nice to have two of you," he says.

One secret of their success at car-pooling, says Ricciuti, is their supervisor. "He has been really cooperative in scheduling us together whenever possible."

Thanks to the gas crisis, Ricciuti and Gatto have lots of company. "We noticed a big difference on the Expressway," says Gatto. "Almost every car had two or more people in it. We were really surprised. I guess carpooling is really catching on."

Double up. *That's what Tony Ricciuti (R) and Jim Gatto have done with driving chores to Grumman's Plant 1.*

It's best route to take

Back in April, Ruth Graham and Lillian Rese began taking turns driving from their homes in Smithtown to Great River. They admit they never really foresaw that the gasoline crunch would ever get this bad. It just makes their decision to carpool better than ever.

Best of friends. *Lillian Rese (L) and Ruth Graham began carpooling to Plant 43 over three months ago.*

They attribute their success in sharing rides to a longtime friendship and good planning. As for any hassles with radio station selection or late sleepers, "it doesn't affect us... we've been good friends for too many years," says Ruth.

To further save on gasoline, "we have several different routes we can take to go home," continues Ruth. "We can go to the supermarket and do other shopping on the way home together. That way we save money ... instead of going home and then going out alone in the car to go shopping."

Both drivers have odd license plates, but that's no problem to either Grummanite. "If there is a long weekend coming up, we won't drive together. That way we can both get up early and wait on the gas lines."

With no end in sight as for gas price increases and long lines at the pumps, both Ruth and Lillian see their commuting to be the best way to go.

"All it takes is one other person in the car with you and you cut the price of gasoline in half."

Carpools eliminate a lot of headaches

You can do the New York Times crossword puzzle. (Taj Mahal city: four letters). You can meet people with similar interests. ("Hi, there. I'm a Capricorn. Are you waiting for regular or unleaded?") You can use the time to become really familiar with the contents of your glove compartment. ("Now, here's something, Edna...a little swizzle stick from Stan and Marie's wedding.")

There are lots and lots of things to do while you're waiting on a four-block long gasoline line.

Or you could skip most of the fun and form a carpool.

If you're in the habit of making a solo trip to work and have to fill up at least once a week, you can reduce that to once a month by finding three people to share the ride with.

Carpooling makes good sense. It saves you time and money, and reduces the sheer annoyance of staring at someone's license plate for two hours while you turn your car on and off.

If you live 15 miles away from work and drive a car that gets about 15 miles per gallon, you're burning up approximately 520 gallons of fuel per year. You and three other easy riders can cut that back to 130 gallons per year if you carpool; and at a dollar a gallon, it's easy arithmetic to see how that puts $390 back in your pocket.

Once you've assembled a group and worked out routes and schedules, common sense and courtesy should make your carpool a success. Here are a few things to consider:

Money. Make sure all cost-sharing arrangements are worked out well in advance.

Time. Agree on how long the carpool will wait for over-sleepers.

Insurance. Check your policy for adequate coverage and possible restrictions or discounts.

Errands. The carpooler who keeps other members waiting while he just runs in for a minute to get Twinkies, cat food, or a new pair of sneakers is not being a good sport.

Food. Anchovy Pop Tarts are unacceptable breakfast foods, even in larger cars.

If things don't go smoothly right away, don't give up. Allow a few weeks to work out a comfortable routine. Carpooling is worth the effort it takes.

Check lists

As gasoline prices rise and long lines at the gas pump increase, carpooling looks more and more attractive. For those interested in starting a carpool, help is available at all Employee Services (ES) offices.

All ES locations have lists of Grummanites, grouped by zip codes, to assist people in finding potential carpoolers in their neighborhood. In addition, a survey of Grumman employees interested in carpooling compiled by the Nassau County Office of Public Transportation is also available.

Selden bound. *Plant 15'ers (L to R) Herman Cornils, Barbara Elling, Joe Angland and Vic Peckenschneider depart for home.*

Share rides; give & take

Finding the right person for a carpool "is like picking a friend," says Pete Peterson who has been carpooling for 13 years. "You want to find someone who is responsible and someone you'd like to spend time with."

Peterson, a clerk in Machine Parts in Plant 2, has been sharing a car with Walter Moule, an inspector in Plant 2 Assemblies, for a year. Last January they were joined by Peterson's son Clint, a bench mechanic in Fluid Systems.

Punctuality is the most important factor in successful carpooling, Peterson says. "I've seen some guys who could never get up on time and they went through seven or eight carpools.

"I try to get in here well before the starting time. I can relax for a while, and find out what's going on for the day. Fortunately we all like to get in very early."

Another important factor in a happy carpool, he says, "is to always let the others know what is happening. If you know you are not going to be able to drive on Friday, don't call at 5 a.m. on Friday morning and say you are not going in."

All three men in the carpool are Islip residents and Moule lives only 1½ miles from the Petersons. The daily round trip is about 42 miles and each of the Petersons and Moule drive only one week out of three.

"Primarily, the carpool is set up to save money on gas and wear and tear on the car. Since you aren't using your car most of the time, you can really save, particularly these days with the high prices," says Peterson.

One good turn deserves...

Joe Angland and Vic Peckenschneider of Plant 15 live only two miles away from each other in Selden. So when Vic's car needed some repair work, he asked Joe if he could ride in with him.

"When I got my car back from the shop, we decided it made more sense to keep coming in together anyway. So we kept it up," says Vic. "Then Barbara Elling joined, and Herman Cornils. We all live in Selden. It's worked out beautifully."

In exchange for the benefits of saving time, money, and wear and tear on their cars however, the members find that they've had to make some small changes in the way they structure their days.

"I was always one for going out to lunch instead of eating in the cafeteria," says Vic. "I don't do that very often now. But if you have an errand that you absolutely have to attend to during the day, you can usually find someone who's heading that way anyhow. You can make it work."

Selden is 30 miles away from Bethpage. Every night, the group decides which traffic jam they want to get into: the one on Northern State Parkway or the one on the Long Island Expressway. They all agree that traffic is less irritating when you have friends to share the aggravation with. And frequently, they say, the three non-drivers will just sleep through it.

Although they are all confident of the others' skills, Barbara takes a lot of kidding and has to put up with "woman driver" jokes. "We're all going to sleep now, Barbara," one of them will say, "so you can drive any way you want."

Join the crowd

According to a recent, highly sophisticated survey by a reliable source (a PLANE NEWS staffer with a clipboard and a BIC pen), most people at Grumman still don't carpool.

On Thursday, June 28, 457 cars cruised through the Hazel Street gate between 7:30 and 8:00 a.m.; 380 of them with only one Grummanite per vehicle.

Share the ride. *For over five years, (L to R) Bill Findlay, Dick Marth, Tony Newman and Joe Schaefer have traveled to work together in a carpool. (Photos by Fred Annette)*

Call them 'easy riders'

Saving money is only one reason that four engineers from Plants 30 and 35 have been carpooling together for the past five years. Carpools also save wear and tear on the driver.

We travel 32 miles each way and that can be very tiring and nerveracking," says Dick Marth, a senior products engineer in Plant 30. "When I drove alone, I found my teeth were clenched by the time I got to work." The solution was carpooling, and right now he only has to drive about five days a month.

But not just carpooling with anyone. "We look for someone who is a careful driver, who won't run red lights or lose his temper while driving," says Tom Newman, a computer engineer in Plant 35. "Then you can relax, read the paper, even get some work done if necessary."

Although all of the carpool members have to travel to other plants in Bethpage on occasion, they have found being carless is not an insurmountable problem. "You try to get someone to give you a ride," says Newman, "or you can even walk to some of the other plants. But I wish Grumman had those little minibuses like they had in the sixties. It would be helpful now that so many of us carpool."

One advantage of carpooling, says Joe Schaefer, a design engineer in Plant 35, is that "it's a lot of fun. You can learn a lot of things during the drive. One of us is a gardener, another is involved in Little League and one guy knows all the good restaurants in the area. It makes the drive very interesting."

But all is not perfect, says Bill Findlay, the fourth member of the group and a senior specifications engineer in Plant 35. "You have to make certain sacrifices. For example, if you aren't driving that day, you can't get things done on your lunch hour. and unless you drive in by yourself, you can't go anywhere directly after work, except back home. But the advantages so far outweigh the few disadvantages. All in all, carpooling is well worth it."

In good hands?

One of the many questions raised when people are thinking about joining a carpool is "Will my car insurance go up?"

The best answer is to give your insurance agent a call. Some companies, such as The Travelers, offer rating credits on liability premiums if you drive your car two days or less a week to work. Because carpoolers do share rides and cut down on their weekly mileage, it could affect their insurance liability rates. **They'd go down, not up.**

There is one area that many people, especially carpoolers should look into. Most reliable insurance companies recommend minimum liability coverage of $100,000 per passenger and $300,00 per occurrence. Many people continue to renew their auto insurance without really checking on what coverage they do have. Now might be a good time to find out.

Also, in New York State, automobile owners must have a minimum of $50,000 no fault insurance. Higher limits are optional and should be considered.

In short, it's a good time to call your auto insurance agent, and find out the discounts and your present policy dealing with liability.

Carpooling adds up to big savings in money, time

Driving alone, Joe spends $15 a week on gasoline to travel to and from work.

By teaming up with Fred, Joe spends $7.50 a week on gas.

When John joins the car pool, Joe spends $5 a week on gas.

Sharing rides with May, John, and Fred, Joe spends only $3.75 a week on gas.